428 [562] [583]

Daughters are not considered in inheritance matters if there are male heirs. A daughter's share of family possessions normally comes to her as a marriage present: a kimono, a chest, a mirror, a pillow, and a quilt-like blanket (futon), and other personal articles, or money, depending on the economic abilities of the father. In the absence of male heirs, women (either as wives or daughters) can and do inherit the house and property. In a family without sons, the head has several alternatives: he may allow the daughter to inherit, or adopt a bridegroom for his own house, the first distasteful to the father because there is no one to continue the family line, the second distasteful to the groom who must desert his own family. A third alternative is to adopt a young male child of a relative. [597]

The passing down of property in these villages is governed in large part also by custom and the individual desire of the parents. In the villages, there were no instances of which I knew in which disputes over inheritance and the disposition of property had been carried to court for settlement. Quarrels among a father and his sons or the first sons and his younger brothers are said to be rather common. Much depends on the temperament and the generosity of the first son who controls the property on the death or retirement of his father. The problem was often put in this way: the first son must look after his younger brothers and give them land, but he must also keep his eye on the estate he will be able to pass down to his own children. [692] [578]

2

Essentials of the Inheritance System.

The essentials of the inheritance system, as it was found to be working in these villages, were substantially the same. (1) In the division of property on the death or retirement of the father (or the head of the house), the house site itself is never divided. The family residence, the buildings in the compound remain intact. The house is a symbol of a family's existence and its future. If it is also the main house of the extended family, it is the site of the original founder and is even more inviolate.

An interesting question arises when the first sons are male twins. An old practice, now abandoned, was that the second of the twins inherited as the first son. This was based on a belief that the last child out of the womb was the first one in, and therefore the older. In the villages, one still hears this explanation from older people, but now the universal practice is for the first born to become the first son.

(2) The rest of the property is divided, in varying proportions, among the remaining sons. The first son gets the money, but he is expected to share this. He normally gets at least half the property, the remaining half being divided up among the other sons, either in the

584 place, as it requires the participation of the principals and their families. Young country people are likely to hesitate before going against their parents' wishes, dispensing with a ceremony and the celebration which follows, and eloping to Naha or to some larger town.

In practice, events seldom reach this stage of differences in opinion. Some one will give way. An actual happening illustrates this point. A young man, a third son, about 20 years old, fell in love with a girl, aged 23, a bus driver's assistant. The boy wished to marry her, even though by present day standards he was young for marriage.[1] His parents objected to the match, not because of antipathy to the girl whom they liked, but because she was three years older than the boy. This is an interesting objection [582] because formerly many wives were older than their husbands, although too great an age differential was considered a trifle ludicrous. Apparently in the older arranged marriage, parents intentionally selected a bride older than the husband. In the family registers, among the very old, the wife is often older than the husband. At present the girl is either younger or about the same age.

The boy acceded to his parents' wishes and did not marry the [848] girl but kept on seeing her. Later the girl became pregnant. His parents discussed the matter among members of the extended family resident in the village, and, in much distress, consented to the marriage. Once the marriage was decided upon, there was no objection to the two living together.

836 Some premarital living together is found in Okinawa. The boy [583] works on his own parents' fields and helps the girl's parents. The girl reciprocates by helping at the boy's parents' home. During this time, the boy lives at home but spends the night with the girl at her home.

582 Young men normally do not get married until their 24th or 25th year, though there are cases of earlier marriages. Girls are in their early twenties. Earlier marriages may be an indication that a child is on the way. This relatively late age for marriage is not old in the culture. In older times, young people were married in their 13th [117] and 14th year. This practice gradually changed under Japanese rule.[2]

1 The Japanese word for love is ai-suru, but now one frequently hears the Japanese word rabu borrowed from the English love.

2 Writing in 1910 from personal observation, Simon said that with the "Japanization" of the islands and the increased difficulty and expense in making a living, the time for marriage was postponed and that a marriage at 15 years was now an exception. Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, 88 and 90. Schwartz, In Togo's country, 1908, writing of conditions around the turn of the century, says that marriages are contracted between the 14th and 17th year, p. 150.

date of their birth (using the Japanese reign date), where they had gone to school and their present occupations. This was done separately for each. After this was over, the bride and groom stood silently and politely, but without outward expression, while three guests in turn, previously chosen, made speeches, offering their congratulations and best wishes. On this particular occasion, the principal of the school at which the bride was teaching, the principal of the school at which the groom was a teacher, and a mutual friend of the couple spoke.

These proceedings do not receive the undivided attention of the guests who have been drinking sake for some time. On the tops of the tables, dancing in the traditional Okinawan manner and the accompanying singing have begun. The dances and songs, usually performed by men in their forties and fifties, were done with grace. These are part of all social gatherings of any consequence.

The sober attitudes of the work day are cast aside. The best clothes have been put on. There is a great contrast between the barefooted partially clothed farmer or fisherman of the daytime and his appearance at social occasions. These events are conducted with dignity and poise, at least until the sake consumption has risen to a high point. The party then becomes a noisy melee of dancing, singing, and talking, but without quarrelling or fighting. There is little self-consciousness in entertaining others. Talented guests do not have to be cajoled into performing. Dancing, singing, and samisen playing continue spontaneously, with another performer beginning after one has finished. The wedding party lasts from about 5 to 8, but many of the guests stay much later until the sake is gone.

Following the san-san-kudo, another but more private ceremony took place while the guests were entertaining themselves. In the wedding room, colored cakes and tea were placed on a small table. The female relatives of the bride and groom, mothers and sisters mostly, sat opposite one another and ate cakes and drank the tea together. This ceremony indicated the willingness of the bride's family to give up the daughter, and of the groom's family to receive her. After this ceremony, the bride's gifts from her parents were carried in. These vary with the family's wealth. In this case, they were a chest of drawers, a mirror, a heavy comforter, pillows, and a mosquito net. Before the war, gifts were more lavish than now. The usual presents now are a large chest of drawers (tansu), two heavy quilts or comforters (futon), a mirror (kagami), two Japanese type pillows (makura), and a large mosquito net (kaya). A poor family would be most likely to omit the chest of drawers. A new kimono and money may be included.

A Y20 note is the usual gift of an ordinary guest at a wedding. Closer friends will give about Y100. There is no uniform practice about gifts from the groom's to the bride's family. About Y1000 may be presented prior to marriage. The bride's family uses the money to purchase the wedding gifts.

The day following the marriage, there is another ceremony, this

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Free choice in marriage does not mean that the family system will disintegrate because parents have lost control in selecting mates for their children. The family system is much more likely to break down if the head of a house must assume greater responsibility for the support of relatives, or if the young leave their homes and are scattered in the towns. 582 602

Trial marriage is said to be uncommon in Okinawa, but there does not seem to be any disapproval when it appears. Perhaps trial marriage is an inappropriate word, and living together prior to an intended marriage is a better term. In one case, a young man lived with his intended wife; sometimes he brought her to his parents' home. As his duties required some travelling, the girl often went with him. In Hanashiro, this custom is not practiced. When young people live together before marriage, with the parents' consent, they help one another's families with the daily chores. 583 ●

Some married men have relations with other women, usually widows or unmarried girls, and have children by them. This is not rare, but it is by no means considered correct behavior. In one village, the first son with his wife and children live, as is customary, with his parents, but he continues to have relations with two unmarried women by whom he has had children. All three women live in the same village, know the situation, and manage to avoid one another fairly well. Naturally the wife is much disturbed by the arrangement. The man, now about 33, has 11 children by the three women. The children of the second and third women are classified in the family registers in the mother's family as illegitimate (shiseiji). This is an extreme case. 837 [848]

In another community, there was an instance of the effects of war and repatriation on a marriage. Before the war this man and his wife had emigrated to Saipan. She was afraid of the bombing and decided to return to her parents' home in rural Japan, to which her husband consented. He remained in Saipan and later lived with and married the girl who was his personal servant. They returned to Okinawa; he had a child by her and is now living with her. The new family register, made up after the war, does not show the old marriage. His first wife, whom he still admires, has written him, but he has not replied. While he expressed no regrets about the loss of the first wife, he talked about the second as if she were still a servant.

In the villages, the cases of a married man living with another woman, without any formal estrangement from the real wife, are in my opinion not uncommon--with the exception of Hanashiro. As one lives in a village and gradually hears confidences, departures from strict fidelity seem more frequent than appear on the surface. There is general agreement too that illegitimacy has increased since the 848

584 she objects violently, the matter may be dropped. If the go-betweens
[851] succeed in making arrangements, they become the special friends and patrons of the young couple, officiating at the marriage ceremony and attending the rituals during the first week after the birth of all the couple's children.

The first engagement event is a small family affair at the bride's house, attended by a few close relatives of the couple, who ceremonially eat rice from the same bowl. The food is contributed by the groom's
[836] family. From this time on the groom may spend evenings and nights at the bride's house, where he is permitted to have sexual intercourse
[583] with the girl. For a man whose girl lives in the same village, the day is now divided between work for his own household and helping the girl's family in the field. The groom receives supper from the girl's family, who encourage him to stay for the night. The couple is never seen together in public, although the girl also helps occasionally at her groom's house.

The second engagement party is held some later time, also at the girl's house. All the relatives of the bride whom she wishes to introduce to the groom and his family are invited. The groom also invites his relatives and friends. Food and drink are supplied by the groom. Since this may be quite a burden, the bride urges him not to hurry in planning for this party. At this engagement ceremony, relatives and friends congratulate the male members of the bride's family and some of the close female relatives, the mother and sometimes an aunt, or the grand-
[537] mother. Short speeches are exchanged. The girl's father, in response to well-wishing, may point out that the girl is inexperienced and that she needs guidance and education from the groom's family. The groom also toasts his father-in-law, tells him that he will do his best, and thanks him and his wife for their permission to marry.

585 The actual marriage ceremony may be postponed until much later.
[584] One reason for the long engagement period is to see whether the girl becomes pregnant, or as one person said, "To see if the seeds match."
[843] There are also economic considerations. The ceremony takes place at the groom's house. The go-between, his wife, and a few friends go to the bride's home to accompany her and her relatives and friends to the
[178] groom's house. The elaborateness of the celebration depends on the wealth of the groom's family, but since the war, all families have economized in this as well as in other ceremonies. The cost of the wedding is carried by the groom, but it is to some extent offset by small money gifts which guests contribute. The groom gives the bride's family a certain amount of money—in one case about 2000 yen (approximately $17.00) or two thirds of a well-to-do Taira family's monthly

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

cash income, earned by several adult members in joint work, or equal to about one half of a teacher's monthly salary. The girl brings a dowry consisting of furniture, household utensils, and other things, so, as one person said, the groom is repaid in one form or another. In former times the men had to pay a fine to the parents of the bride if she married out of the village (Suttles, personal communication; Tamura, 1927 translation:44).

Even under present conditions the wedding ceremony is colorful compared to most other private ceremonies. All guests attend in their best clothes and the bride wears a special kimono and a special wig hair dress. She is seated next to the groom, who wears Western-style clothes instead of the traditional silk kimono. The whole ceremony is presided over by the go-betweens. While preliminaries take place, the bride sits almost motionless. Her face expresses what Glacken describes as "undescribable gloom" (1955:218). This continues even through the climax of the event, the ceremonial exchange of wine which symbolizes the union of the participants. During this part of the ceremony the guests, who have been enjoying food and sake and talking amicably, give this moment a solemn meaning by their silence. Speeches by the go-between and other notables follow. The virtue of the bride and her family and of the groom are told and acknowledged by a thank-you address by the groom. Parents of the couple sit close to them but have no other function than to accept congratulations. The bride then goes around introducing herself to the guests.

Children are not present at this event. They line up outside the house and peek through openings to see the bride and watch the guests, who start dances as soon as good food and wine take effect. After the formal part of the wedding, the feast ends like any such event in the village—with great gaiety. The bride acts as hostess; she changes from her kimono and heavy hair dress into more suitable clothes and sees that the guests are well taken care of. The length of this feast depends, of course, on how much food and drink the family is able to provide. Finally, when all guests have left, the bride and groom retire to the bedroom which has been reserved for them, sometimes furnished with one or two pieces, a chest of drawers or a Western-style closet supplied by the bride's family. The bride also provides the comforter for the marriage bed. Friends of the groom may play a prank and replace the normal-sized comforter with a small one, "so that the marriage is consumated quicker," as they say.

Sexual relations between husband and wife are not discussed in public except in jocular references. In spite of the intimacy of household members in the confinement of a small house, one attempts to

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Part II

Child Training

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Chapter 12

Pregnancy and Childbirth

The custom of "trial marriage" stresses the importance Taira villagers put on a woman's ability to bear children, for it is imperative that there be heirs to carry on the family line. The first child is usually born within one or two years after marriage. Taira people would be extremely surprised if a child is not born soon, for children, especially male offspring, are desired. A barren wife faces the possibility of annulment of her marriage by her husband or even her husband's parents. Should this action be disagreeable to her husband, she may still be forced to take the lesser role of co-wife. A fertile woman who fails to bear a male child may suffer a situation not unlike that of a barren woman. Pregnancies, however, arouse a great amount of ambivalence in attitude.

Most women welcome pregnancy happily, knowing that they are fulfilling their role as a woman. Nevertheless, some women complain

If the
584 girl's family is favorably disposed, one or both parties visit a diviner
791 (sanjinsoo, Japanese 'ekisha') to determine the compatibility of the couple (seesoo shirabi). The diviner ostensibly does this by casting horoscopes and drawing lots, but it is likely that he also gives weight to factors known to him or revealed by the persons requesting advice so that if one of the participants has strong objections to the marriage he may find reasons why it should not be. This interpretation is merely an hypothesis, but it seems probably that the decision of the diviner may thus be a useful face-saving device. Possibly for this reason the go-between seems to be of secondary importance.

After the decision has been made to unite the two families in marriage
•[593] there may be a formal betrothal ceremony (ubukui). For this the prospective groom's family sends certain gifts including a sum of money to the bride's home. This money, called injoojing, corresponds to the "bride price" of some societies. Its payment is probably the most essential element in the whole procedure, since a small sum is still paid even when other formalities are dispensed with. This payment seals the agreement.

585 The wedding ceremony (niibichi, "drawing the roots") takes place at the groom's house in the evening of a day determined by the diviner. First a party goes from the groom's house to the bride's house with gifts. This party then carries the bride to the groom's house, where they are met by a
[17] welcoming party. In recent times the ceremony at the groom's house has been the Japanese 'sansankudo', exchange of drinks; the original Okinawan ceremony was somewhat different. When this has been completed the bride and groom celebrate separately each with friends and relatives of the same sex. On the following day, or whenever the celebration is over, the couple pays a formal visit to the bride's parents.

[184] This elaborate procedure is not usual at the present time among country
[593] people. In fact, the ceremony may not occur at all; the woman may merely come to live with the man with little or no formal recognition of the change in status beyond perhaps the payment of a small bride price. The marriage has a legal existence when it is recorded in the 'koseki'. It may not be recorded immediately; often it is recorded only a little before or together with the recording of the birth of the first child. This practice obviates changing the record if the marriage is not successful.

585 But formerly among the gentry of Naha and Shuri the wedding was even
178 more elaborate than the procedure just described. Moreover, after the cere-
585 mony the groom, instead of entertaining his male relatives and friends at
[548] home, took them to a jurinuyaa where for three days and nights they were entertained by the juri with food, drink, music, and sex. I am acquainted with three interpretations explaining why the groom spends his wedding night with a prostitute. The first, that given by an American missionary[1] explains the practice as symbolizing the freedom of the male and demonstrating to the bride that her husband was free to find sexual gratification elsewhere. The second interpretation was one given to me by a man in his thirties, a descendant of the Shuri gentry, and a man with rather "modern" ideas. He said that

[1] The missionary Schwarz, whose work is not presently available to me.